

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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UNCLAS TUNIS 1870

E.O.11652: NA
TAGS: BEXP TS
SUBJ: LEAD AND ZINC

1. PENARROYA TUNISIE, LEAD AND ZINC REFINING COMPANY IN WHICH PENARROYA FRANCE AND GOT EACH HOLD 50 PERCENT EQUITY, IS TO EXPLOIT A NEW MINE AT FEDJ HASSINE, NEAR GHARDIMAOU IN CENTRAL WESTERN TUNISIA CLOSE TO ALGERIAN BORDER. MINE TO PRODUCE ANNUALLY, AS OF 1979, 10,000 TONS OF CONCENTRATED ZINC AT 55 PERCENT. A WASHING PLANT IS BEING BUILT TO ENRICH RAW ZINC ORE OF ONLY 12 PERCENT CONCENTRATE.

2. WE UNDERSTAND TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BOUGHT OUT PENARROYA FRANCE'S SHARE IN COMPANY. THIS WILL BE MADE PUBLIC ONCE TUNISIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PASSES LAW TO THAT EFFECT.

3. PENARROYA HAS ENTRUSTED BULGARIAN STATE ENGINEERING FIRM WITH STUDY OF NEW LEAD AND ZINC REFINING PLANT WITH ANNUAL COAPCITY OF 100,000 TONS OF LEAD AND ZINC CONCENTRATES WHICH WOULD YIELD 50,000 TONS OF METAL. EXISTING PLANT LOCATED IN SOUTHERN SUBURBS OF TUNIS IS TOO OLD AND POLLUTION LEVEL NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE IN
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HEAVILY POPULATED AREA. IT SEEMS STUDY IS RECOMMENDING PLANT TO BE BUILT AT MENZEL BOURGUIBA, 60 KILOMETERS NORTH OF TUNIS, WHERE POST FACILITIES AND QUALIFIED MANPOWER ARE READILY AVAILABLE. (DOMESTIC PRODUCTION SUPPLEMENTED BY IMPORTS OF ORE PARTICULARLY FROM MOROCCO, ALGERIA, ITALY AND SWEDEN.

4. PENARROYA TUNISIE'S DIRECTOR GENERAL IS MR. AHMED

NABI, FORMER TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OF SFAX-GAFSA PHOSPHATE COMPANY. ITS PRESIDENT IS MR. ALI ATTIA WHO IS ALSO PRESIDENT OF SOTEMI, THE LARGER GOT CONTROLLED FIRM IN NON-FERROUS METALS. NABI HAS RECENTNLY EXPRESSED INTEREST IN ATTRACTING AMERICAN OR OTHER FOREIGN EQUITY INVESTMENT IN MINING JOINT VENTURES. MULCAHY

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